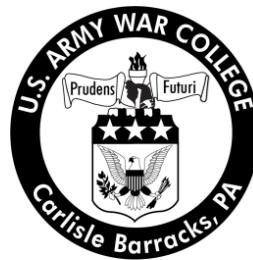


Strategy Research Project International Fellow

Finland's Security Solution in the Future

by

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United States Army War College
Class of 2013

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE
*Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188*

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) xx-03-2013	2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT	3. DATES COVERED (From - To)		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Finland's Security Solution in the Future			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
			5b. GRANT NUMBER	
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Petri Mattila Finnish Defence Forces			5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
			5e. TASK NUMBER	
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Colonel Robert Hamilton Department of National Security and Strategy			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.				
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 6249				
14. ABSTRACT Finland's current security strategy will not prove beneficial for the nation without profound and concrete changes. Nordic and EU cooperation have been presented as alternatives to NATO membership. The complexity of taking into account the public opinion, Finnish political relation and the economic relations of both to Russia and the EU is point of the equation. As an EU-member state it cannot ignore any of these factors and it has to reconsider its foreign and security policy to coordinate the upcoming decisions over the European security arrangements. This paper examines different strategic security possibilities for Finland: 1) to rely on EU resources as a primary means for national security, 2) to rely on NATO capabilities, and 3) to rely on Nordic cooperation. The solution can also be a practical combination of all three. This paper concludes with recommendations based on consequences of each option.				
15. SUBJECT TERMS Security Strategy, EU, NATO, NORDEFCO, USA				
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 36	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU			c. THIS PAGE UU

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Finland's Security Solution
in the Future**

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Abstract

Title: Finland's Security Solution in the Future

Report Date: March 2013

Page Count: 36

Word Count: 6249

Key Terms: Security Strategy, EU, NATO, NORDEFCO, USA

Classification: Unclassified

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Finland's Security Solution in the Future

Those who retreat into their shells will not succeed in the newly shaping international environment. While the size of a country is not irrelevant, it is also not the only relevant factor. The international success of Finland will increasingly be determined by her own vitality and the ability to find and offer solutions.

—President Sauli Niinisto

Finland's Security Situation today

According to the Programme of Government, Finnish foreign and security policy is based on good bilateral relations, a strong influence within the European Union (EU), and effective multilateral cooperation as part of the international community.¹ Finland will pursue an active foreign policy and foster cooperation with other nations and peoples. It will play an active role in increasing cooperation between the Nordic countries and other neighboring countries, in developing activities of the European Union, and in acting as a member of the global community. Finland will encourage efforts to reduce global poverty.²

The goal of Finland's foreign and security policy is to serve these national efforts to the overall benefit of Finland and the Finns. The aim is to guarantee security and welfare close to home, while promoting the same in more distant places as much as our resources allow. In terms of foreign policy, the Finns must now work hard to create the preconditions for Finland's international success. The Finns must find new ways of promoting Finland, not only in terms of exports but also as an attractive investment opportunity as well as a valuable political partner.³

Finland will actively participate the development of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CDSP) in

accordance with the opportunities offered by the Lisbon Treaty. In the enhanced military cooperation of the future, competences and capabilities will be utilized reciprocally, in collaboration with the EU and Nordic partner countries. Finland must continue to ensure a credible defense and participate in the European security and defence cooperation, currently under development, as well as in international military crisis management. The basic premise is to defend Finland's entire territory through a defence system based on general conscription.⁴

Nordic and EU cooperation have been presented in public discussion as possibilities and even alternatives to NATO membership. Finland, being militarily non-allied after its decades of neutrality, is participating both in NATO-led Response Force (NRF) - and EU-led Battlegroup (EUBG) –concept. Nevertheless in its present state Finland is politically unwilling to join NATO.⁵

Finland's current strategy will not prove beneficial for the nation without profound and concrete changes. Finland's recent unsuccessful attempt to gain a seat among the non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council for 2013-14 provides tangible evidence of a flawed strategic approach. UN delegates chose to put their trust in Australia and Luxembourg instead. This crushing defeat in a bid for a seat on the UN Security Council this past autumn surprised, and may have shocked, Finland's foreign policy leaders. Many reasons for the failure to gain a seat have been presented by different experts; however a central reason them is Finland's unclear and unspecified foreign and security policy.

The brand-new Government Security and Defence Policy Report 2012 does not promote any new significant political view. The Report is built on the comprehensive

concept of security, in accordance with the Government Programme. The most important functions of Finland's security and defence policy are safeguarding Finland's independence, territorial sovereignty and society's basic values, advancing the security and well-being of the population and sustaining the functioning of society. Finland's security policy encompasses both actively creating security and anticipating and repelling threats.⁶

One of the most significant new focuses in the Government's Report is on the increasingly important international defense materiel cooperation. "We are more and more dependent on international cooperation", says Defence Minister Carl Haglund. International defense cooperation and participation in military crisis management strengthen, for their part, Finland's defense capability; Minister Haglund notes that Nordic defense cooperation in particular plays an important role. "To safeguard sufficient resilience to crisis it is important to find means with which the support from society's resources and the contributions of international cooperation to military national defense will be secured", Minister Haglund concludes.⁷

Confidence in the management of defence policy has weakened since last year. Now 73 % believe it is well managed. In 2011, 81 % thought defense policy was well managed. Confidence in the management of foreign policy remains on the same level. Three-fourths think that Finland should remain a militarily non-aligned country. Also the views on Finland's membership in NATO are the same as before; less than one-fifth or 18 % are in favor of membership while 71 % are against joining NATO. Respondents were asked for the first time about their opinion of military cooperation with other Nordic countries and NATO and in the European Union. Each of them was answered

separately. Military cooperation with other Nordic countries was very widely supported (92 %) and 78 % were in favor of military cooperation in the EU. NATO divided opinions: 45 % took a positive view while 46 % took a negative view on military cooperation with NATO.⁸ These answers indicate how complicated the situation is also for decision makers. In elections discussion about security solutions in the future makes politicians cautious and it is more a domestic political question than a foreign and security political one. All parties avoid political discussion about NATO, so as not to lose voters. That is one reason, why we do not have an open and diverse conversation regarding NATO membership in Finland.

Another important factor is Finland's geographical position. According to the Finnish Security and Defence Policy Report 2012, "Russia is one of the most important factors in Finland's security environment."⁹ President Sauli Niinisto and many of his predecessors have also brought into focus the importance of geography in the Finnish foreign policy.¹⁰ As a counterbalance, president Niinisto has said that Finland must stay close to the global centers of power. This naturally applies to the United States, which will remain as one of the most influential countries in the world.¹¹

The vital question for Finland is which would be the acceptable options from the Finnish point of view in developing the future security of Europe. What kind of solutions would be either satisfactory or on the other hand absolutely unacceptable? This is a particularly challenging issue for Finland. If NATO remains the main security tool in Europe, what options does Finland have to carry out its own security and defense policy?

This paper examines these different strategic possibilities for Finland. The examination includes the following options: 1) to rely on EU resources as a primary means for national security, 2) to rely on NATO capabilities, and 3) to rely on Nordic cooperation. The solution can also be a practical combination of all three. The complexity of taking into account the public opinion, Finnish political relation and the economic relations of both to Russia and the EU is point of the equation. As an EU-member state it cannot ignore any of these factors and it has to reconsider its foreign and security policy to coordinate the upcoming decisions over the European security arrangements.

In every option, Finland must maintain and develop a credible defense which is appropriately scaled to its security environment. But so far, to maintain “stability” in Northern Europe, Finland has refrained from applying for membership in NATO, promoting common defense in the EU or encouraging stronger Nordic cooperation.

Finland and Russia – Economic and Military Considerations

Russia’s economic and military relationship with Finland will continue to be important in the future. Our economic contacts have grown to become extremely significant. Indeed, Russia was Finland’s leading trading partner in terms of exports and imports in 2011.¹² Russian growth supports the Finnish economy, while Finland is able to offer tools for the development of the Russian economy. The relations between Finland and Russia are good, and are constantly evolving. The most notable change is the lowering of the barriers of everyday interaction and connections. Our strengths lie in our relations, which are functional at all levels, and in our ability to launch initiatives and create fruitful cooperation with Russia. Finland should not avoid voicing problems relating to rule of law, democracy or human rights in Russia¹³

In public, Finnish officials typically eschew any explicit suggestion that Russia poses a military threat to their country. However, they are adept at signaling their concern with Russia's foreign policy assertiveness and its long-term intentions, especially in the wake of Russia's armed conflict with Georgia in August 2008.¹⁴ Similarly, the Finnish Defense Command's public assertion that "Finland's defense is not built on any specific enemy or threat" seems belied by its subsequent clarification that the "focal point in developing Finland's defense is planning how to prevent and repel a surprise strategic strike."¹⁵

According to researcher James Greene, Russia has an ongoing campaign in Ukraine and Georgia, where one objective is to block progress towards NATO and EU integration. Working with sympathetic domestic forces, Russia undermined practical cooperation and impeded political, economic and administrative reforms that constituted essential criteria for NATO and EU membership – reforms that, if implemented, would demonstrate the value of such membership to the public. Media campaigns shaped negative perceptions of Western institutions and promoted both fraternity and fear towards Russia. Within Western institutions, Russia leveraged bilateral relationships and empowered skeptics to undermine perceptions of candidates' suitability for membership and highlight the purported negative consequences of NATO enlargement for European security.¹⁶

Russia also tries to influence Finland. Russian commentators further from the top have taken even stronger stances on Finland's possible NATO membership. First Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee on International Affairs Yuliy Kvitsinskiy has warned Finland about the consequences of membership, and said that

this would lead to military, political and economic counteractions by Russia.¹⁷ Last summer, Russia's Chief of the General Staff General Nikolai Makarov warned Finland against cooperating with NATO as such cooperation represents a threat to Russian security. Instead, he argued, Finland should have a tighter bilateral defense relationship with Russia. Makarov also criticized efforts by the Nordic countries, including Finland, to expand their mutual defense cooperation. He also attacked Finland's right to conduct military exercises on its own territory near Russia's borders.¹⁸ Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen stated immediately that Finland will decide "on the basis of its own consideration" what is best for the Finns, and that such decisions will not be left to Russian generals. He emphasized that decisions on arranging military exercises are a part of national self-determination. It is an interesting fact that Katainen made his comments during a visit to Washington, D.C.¹⁹

If Finland were to opt for joining NATO, this would be registered in Russian defense and security thinking as a serious concern. Unlike the Baltic accession in 2004, the response from the newly assertive Russia could potentially be swift and damaging.²⁰ Some Finnish commentators arguing against membership in NATO are just as willing to invoke the Russia factor as those who argue for it. Those in the "in favor" camp tend to say that membership in NATO would create a new forum for dialogue with Russia; those against (even if they see NATO bringing some security against Russian military attacks) say that the inevitable deterioration in relations with Russia would cause far more harm than good to Finland's overall security situation.²¹

Officially it is strongly emphasized that Russia will not influence Finland's NATO decision to join or not to join the Alliance. Nevertheless, even Finland's consideration of membership seems to have increased tension with Russia.²²

Finland and the European Union (EU)

The EU's real strength as an international power stems neither from its military nor diplomatic capabilities. Rather, as the world's biggest economy and trading power, it possesses vast assets that make the main counterpart to the U.S. The EU has defined itself as the most important provider of development and humanitarian assistance, and greatest source of international norms and standards. Despite the rise of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), the EU - USA economic relationship remains by far the world's most important in terms of both trade and investment.²³ Unfortunately, the EU's great potential for leadership is rarely translated into genuine influence. EU efforts are far too often disjointed and diffuse and unnecessary complexity and incoherence often result in inaction. If the EU wishes to take greater responsibility for the stability of its neighborhood and play a more effective role in confronting international challenges it will have to develop a much stronger collective sense of purpose and begin to act more coherently.²⁴ The EU is currently inwardly-focused due to the Euro crisis. Britain's public debate about leaving the EU further reduces the EU's coherent international effectiveness.

For Finland, the European Union is a natural choice of political community and its development and actions enhance Finland's stability, prosperity and security. Finland is a dynamic and proactive Member State (MS) of the European Union. Finland promotes the development of a competitive, socially just and effectively functioning European

Union. The Government will support the EU's development, building on the potential of the current Treaties. Finland emphasizes all Member States' equal rights and obligations, institutional balance and the Commission's independent status. Activities based on the community method offer the best means of securing stable and balanced operation of the Union and democracy. The Government will consider projects of integration in the EU case by case basis. As a rule, Finland will continue to take part in the Union's key projects as much as possible.²⁵

Overall, Finland has actively promoted development of the EU's CFSP and CSDP as a means of advancing the common security of EU MS and the EU's global influence. President Niinisto said that it is difficult to imagine that EU countries could exert much of an influence on global politics by acting individually. He stated: "We also have every reason to work towards a deeper common security and defence policy."²⁶ Over the past decade, Finnish officials have served in responsible positions in the European Union's defense- and crisis management –related structures. In line with its support for CSDP, Finnish personnel have participated in several EU-led military and civilian crisis management missions. Some 300 Finnish soldiers participate in the Nordic and German-Dutch battlegroups within the EU's rotating system of rapid reaction forces.²⁷

It seems that the EU membership and the EU's developing CFSP has had a significant impact upon the Finnish official discourse. They had a major role in the post-Cold War re-articulation of the official policy in terms of alignment rather than neutrality. Moreover, the development of the EU's foreign and security policy, specifically the creation of crisis-management capabilities, had a significant effect on the subsequent

re-articulations of the official discourse and its successful integration. EU membership and participation in the CFSP and the CSDP facilitated the transition from neutrality to alignment in the realm of foreign and security policy, and shaped the state identity of Finland.²⁸

Most EU countries have adopted NATO standards and planning systems, and almost all EU countries have participated in NATO operations. Many EU members also belong to NATO and therefore are not interested in developing a strong EU common defense. According to the solidarity clause, the Union and its Member States (MS) shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a MS is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster.²⁹ It is clear, there is a need for further discussion between MS on how military resources could be used. While most MS agreed on the need to examine how EU mechanisms and bodies could be used in this framework, some MS insisted that the coordination authority should be retained by the requesting MS. Some MS argued in favor of use of military assets as a "last resort"; others encouraged the EU institutions to look into the potential use of CSDP assets under the solidarity clause.³⁰

Of course, there are also some other kind of ways to proceed. Finland wants to ensure that the EU is capable of bringing its full contribution to peace processes, in cooperation and coordination with other actors. In 2009, a Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities was adopted by the Council. It contains several important ideas and concrete suggestions to strengthen EU mediation capacities. A Division of Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Mediation has been established.

The EU is working to have the division adequately resourced and supported for its actions.³¹

Most parties in Finland's Government and the public opinion seem to be rather firmly behind the current policy of supporting the development of EU civilian and military crisis management, but they do not support EU's common defense. Most parties in the Opposition also share this opinion. The so called "EU option", as an alternative to NATO, has gained a lot of ground in the Finnish debate. The Lisbon treaty raised hopes in some, especially left-wing, politicians that Finland would be able to forget NATO and "choose the EU" instead.

Finland has prepared a paper (so called "non-paper") to influence the envisaged European Council discussion about defense questions in December 2013. The paper was addressed to the President of the European Council in November 2012. According to this paper, the EU should focus on three "baskets" of issues:

Basket #1: Developing Common Security and Defence Policy (inter alia, further development of CSDP as a tool for EU's global action and political umbrella for multinational defense cooperation)

Basket #2: Pooling and Sharing (P & S) as instrument of Multinational Defense Cooperation

Basket #3: Defense Industry and Markets.³²

The paper stressed more policy and defense cooperation than developing the EU's common defense. This proposition describes both Finland's will to effect the EU's CSDP and defense cooperation and on the other hand Finland's reluctance to advance

more too quickly. Finland should support the EU's common defense and its ongoing development in order for it to be a realistic security solution for Finland.

Finland and NATO – Political and Military Considerations

The “Open Door” policy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been an article of faith for Allies and aspirants alike for more than a decade. Its most recent formulation, approved at the November 2010 Lisbon Summit, states: “The door to NATO membership remains fully open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and whose inclusion can contribute to common security and stability.”³³

Finland is not a member of the military alliance, but it cooperates with NATO and maintains the option of applying for membership. Finland has declared it will not prepare a membership application during this Government’s term of office. Finland will evaluate a possible NATO membership on the basis of its own national security and defence policy interests. It will work to develop cooperation between the EU and NATO, and recognizes NATO’s importance as the key forum of European security policy.³⁴

Finland is engaged in a debate over whether it would be desirable to seek membership in NATO in order to mitigate future security challenges. A full and frank debate has been difficult because it is constrained by a range of political and societal taboos; nevertheless there are indicators that a move toward NATO is not impossible in the foreseeable future.³⁵ Former president and Nobel Prize winner Martti Ahtisaari said: “I see no reason why we could not join NATO. Norway is a member and so are Denmark and Iceland.”³⁶ In Finland, a change of doctrine might be facilitated by the tradition of the population following the political leaders. Currently, however, whenever

NATO is discussed, the limited popular support and Russia's opinion still loom large in the background.³⁷

NATO is an extremely important partner for Finland in crisis management, defence force development and in conducting exercises. In the next few years the focus of our cooperation is likely to shift towards the latter two. The Finnish Defence Forces cannot afford to become an army that is removed from western standards and connections. We have every reason to continue and further develop our cooperation with NATO. It is a part of a bigger picture that also includes the security and defence policy of the EU and Nordic defence cooperation.³⁸

Finnish and Swedish political analysts speculate that if their respective governments were to opt for NATO membership, they would strongly prefer to act together as "tandem riders," according to one Finnish observer. In their view, a coordinated approach would significantly diminish domestic political opposition in both countries, ensure rapid approval by the Allies, and facilitate smooth integration into Alliance military and political structures. Some also believe that if faced with tandem riders, Russia would be more cautious in its reactions.³⁹

For Finnish and Swedish policymakers trying to anticipate how these external developments will play out, the key questions with respect to NATO membership are and will remain very straightforward. First, since NATO's policies and actions will profoundly affect Finland's and Sweden's security environment for the indefinite future, are their national interests better served by having a seat at the table inside every level of Alliance political and military structures where those policies and actions are formulated and implemented? Second, assuming that the overall (albeit unsteady) trend

of NATO–EU cooperation continues, are Finland and Sweden at a disadvantage in shaping that cooperation compared to their 21 fellow EU member states that also belong to NATO.⁴⁰

Sweden and Finland belong to a category all by themselves in the community of PfP (Partnership for Peace) countries. These two countries appear to have little in common with the rest of the countries that make up the diverse PfP group.⁴¹ Finland has trained and served in accordance with NATO procedures for several years. And for example, according to researcher Dr Ann-Sofie Dahl: “Sweden and Finland readily fulfill all requirements for membership in the Alliance, politically as well as militarily; their applications would, according to some NATO sources, be a mere and quick matter of formality. As a matter of fact, within NATO proper, Sweden and Finland are often seen as closer to NATO in many ways than several actual allies because of their substantial contributions and close cooperation with the Alliance.”⁴² Most Finnish politicians and officers also share this view. But the emotionally charged tone of the NATO debate in Finland make politicians of all types hesitant to discuss NATO membership in public. For politicians raising one’s voice either way on NATO leads quickly to being labeled as a right-wing militarist or a left-wing idealist. For Finland’s NATO supporters, NATO is “a community of democratic nations promoting international stability and security, through which Europe can make use of the colossal resources of the United States, and membership in such an organization is an indicator of responsibility.”⁴³

The current system of conscription and territorial defense enjoys wide public support, and is a strong and often used argument against NATO membership. Proponents for membership have tried to argue that NATO would not have to change

either of these basic elements of Finnish defence, but the belief remains strong that NATO would enforce the introduction of a fully professional army and destroy the long-established and fully accepted Finnish defence system.⁴⁴

It would appear that one clear and unambiguous benefit NATO membership would be Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, designed to deter armed aggression against member countries (and for some the *raison d'être* of the alliance) but even this is not an undisputed benefit of membership for Finland. Pro-NATO commentators note this as a key benefit for defense against the eastern neighbor. Nevertheless not only does this trigger national suspicion about the relationship with Russia, but the experiences of the Baltic States since accession call into question the true worth of this commitment.⁴⁵

Keeping the United States actively engaged in European security matters has emerged as a primary strategic objective of Finnish policymakers, albeit one that is seldom acknowledged explicitly. The Finnish government readily acknowledges the key U.S. role in shaping the international security environment. To that end, Finnish officials have pursued both multilateral and bilateral tracks. From a Finnish perspective, their Partnership relationship with NATO represents the most important multilateral track precisely because the United States has made it clear that it regards NATO as the key forum for security cooperation with Europe. Finnish officials also support close EU bilateral relations with the United States. However, they accept that insofar as defense-and security-related issues are concerned, Washington's strong preference will remain to work with Europe through NATO, where Americans have a seat at the table.⁴⁶

Finland has sought to complement its multilateral defense tracks with an increasingly close bilateral defense relationship with the United States. For example: Finland's decision to acquire advanced semi-stealthy Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles (JASSM) from the United States is much more than an arms deal – it has significant political and regional military implications. Finland is only the second country to be approved for JASSM. No NATO country has ever received such an approval. This suggests a significant level of trust in the relationship between the USA and Finland, as well as the importance the USA places on European and regional defense arrangements.⁴⁷

Most parties in Finland's Government and the public opinion seem to be rather firmly behind the current policy of supporting cooperation with NATO but do not endorse membership. Most parties in the Opposition are opposed to almost all cooperation with NATO. If Finland were to decide to join a common defense through NATO membership, the change would have a direct effect on Finland's international position and the conditions of its national security. NATO membership is the only option which can provide security immediately and will be based on a written treaty.

So far, Finland has co-operated with NATO as closely as possible despite its reluctance to seek full membership. Maybe the easiest way for Finland to join NATO might come from the improving relations between the EU and NATO; the closer the relations are, the easier it may be for the Finns to accept NATO as a framework to improve European security. NATO membership would be a final step on the way of getting into the core of such Europe where Finland belongs, instead of insisting on remaining on the margins.

Finland and Nordic cooperation

The Nordic countries⁴⁸ form Finland's nuclear family in terms of history, society and economy. The significance of the Nordic cooperation cannot be overemphasized. Our connections in business life have become closer. Nordic cooperation is now going through a revival: eyes are now set on the future, with the aim of a deep and diverse Nordic partnership. The development of defense cooperation occupies a key role in this work. Finland also seeks to increase exploitation of the Nordic partnership at the international level. Together, the Nordic countries are strong.⁴⁹

"We have enormous areas and resources in the north and the area is important for foreign and security policies. This part of the world is becoming increasingly important for transport, natural resources and tourism. The whole world is looking towards the north, but we live here. We must be conscious of this and we must be in the driving seat with regard to developments", said the Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.⁵⁰ According to the Program of Government, defense, science and innovation policies, as well as environmental and consumer issues, are natural areas of Nordic cooperation that should be developed.⁵¹

The Nordic countries have traditionally played an active role in promoting peace and development through international crisis management both in the United Nations as well in the European structures. Today, this is very true in Afghanistan, where Finland, Sweden and Norway serve in the North of the Country. The cooperation between our three countries will be further intensified in the coming months.⁵² The Nordic Countries also share the valuable experiences from the so called Nordic Battle Group (NBG), one of the EU's battlegroups which is preparing for its third round for the year 2015.⁵³

Finland actively promotes deeper Nordic defence cooperation. Nordic security and defence policy cooperation aims at cost-efficiency in the relevant activities and at ways of securing capabilities. Security policy cooperation will be continued on the basis of the Nordic declaration on solidarity.⁵⁴ Cooperation on defense has taken place for many decades in Scandinavia, but in the age of austerity and with tighter defense budgets, it has now become more important. Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) is the name the long-lasting defense cooperation between the five Nordic countries got after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in 2009. NORDEFCO is not an organization but a working structure for regional cooperation. All operational decisions are made through the national chain of command in each respective country.⁵⁵ Officially, the purpose of NORDEFCO is to strengthen the Participants' national defence, explore common synergies and facilitate efficient common solutions.⁵⁶

NORDEFCO comes in addition to NATO, and is not a competing structure. Its three basic elements are 1) to support the Nordic countries' security and defense policies, 2) to exchange equipment and cooperate on procurements and logistics, and 3) operational cooperation. It is based on shared security challenges in the region, similar military-strategic assessments, similar financial challenges and comparable force requirements. Similar military capabilities may fall below critical levels. The Nordic nations will seek cooperation within areas where two or more nations find it beneficial. There is also strong political and top-level military support – both domestically and from NATO and the EU – for a closer collaboration. NORDEFCO has already produced very good experiences, for example with joint cross-border training, when the combined

territories and airspace of Norway, Sweden and Finland were being used for exercise and training.⁵⁷

The Nordic countries have every reason to continue and develop this cooperation. The common will is strong. Close contacts are needed to achieve better results in procurement, exercises and training. The pressures on the defence budgets only increase the need for cooperation. A good example of a new form of cooperation is the establishment of a Nordic cyber security network by the end of this year. Currently, we are also considering the possibility for Finland and Sweden to participate in Iceland's air surveillance. Norway would also have a central role in this form of cooperation.⁵⁸

Defense cooperation between the Nordic countries is a fairly new phenomenon but is gaining speed. The starting points are identical – national capabilities cost too much and the only way to keep these capabilities in the future is by pooling and sharing them, only national interests are to some extent different. Since the approach is very practical, different military allegiances – Norway, Denmark and Iceland are members of NATO, Sweden and Finland are not – can pose some difficulties. At the same time, Norway and Iceland are not members of the EU. Other challenges to deeper cooperation can include various political priorities, divergent defense industry policies, and national regulation and procedures.

Conclusions

Finland should develop a clear strategy for its security solution in the future. One challenge is that many politicians at higher levels both in the Government and in the Opposition and also the Finnish people do not see any need to change the current policy. Although there are a growing number of EU critics in Finland, the EU still does

not provoke the public as much as NATO does and the Union is still a lot easier to accept as a security provider than NATO. But, although the EU option is supported, for many Finns it is more important that the security guarantees would not change Finland's position as a non-aligned country.

Considering the increasing defense budgets as well as the changes in the strategic environment, intensified European defense cooperation is integral in order to sustain existing capabilities and create new ones. The pooling and sharing of resources increases the effectiveness of the CSDP. However, as military capabilities belong to the MS, a strong political commitment is needed in order to further enhance cooperation. The EU does not currently have enough political will or capacity to organize a collective and common defense of its membership and any military security guarantees it provides are largely theoretical. If the EU and NATO continue the trend toward a closer working relationship in defense and security, this will be increasingly difficult for countries such as Sweden and Finland which are not members in both organizations.

The Nordic cooperation is and will be part of the Finnish security solution, but it is not sufficient alone to provide comprehensive security for Finland. The main reason is that the Nordic countries have different bases for their defense solutions: Norway and Iceland are members of NATO, Sweden and Finland of the EU and Denmark of both. It is considered impossible for the NATO countries to give any additional guarantees to countries outside the alliance. Instead of that, it is easy to identify clear and tangible benefits to cooperation of Nordic neighbors, for example opportunities for cost savings in purchasing and a closer cooperation in crisis management operations.

Finland has recognized and estimated NATO's importance as the key forum of European security policy. If Finland joined NATO, the political relations between Finland and Russia would almost inevitably suffer to some degree, and maybe some limited military remonstrations in the vicinity of the Finnish borders could occur. Looking at the Baltic States' example, one possibility in the event of Finland seeking to join NATO is that the 2004 pattern could be repeated: prodigious noise and bluster generated from Russia before accession, followed by no direct action post factum but a steady campaign of awkwardness toward and occasional disruption of the new NATO neighbor.⁵⁹ One way to make the possible NATO membership easier for Russia is to increase cooperation and interdependence between Russia and Europe. Finland could also accustom Russia to the idea of Finland's membership in NATO and try to come up with ways to "sell" the idea to Russia to make possible accession as painless as possible. From Russia's point of view it would be important that Finland's foreign policy continued being predictable.

Of course, it would be a huge step for Finland if we gave up using the term non-alignment. Some time ago, we were able to give up on the term "neutral" without any trauma. The importance of making a strategic choice for or against joining NATO needs more open and wide discussion today. The possible membership decision needs a stronger political leadership. For instance Chairman of the Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee Pertti Salolainen has stated that "if the President and Prime Minister held a briefing tomorrow saying that they are in favor of membership in NATO, public support for membership would be 80 per cent the week after that".⁶⁰ This trait was highlighted in 1994 with Finland's accession to the EU, when most of the political, intellectual and

media elite declared their support for Finland's membership as soon as it was politically encouraged to do so. The government carried out the biggest information campaign in Finnish history to inform every household about the implications of EU membership.⁶¹

NATO will remain an important institutional setting for managing relationships between Europe and the USA. But, it is increasingly important to also develop strong bilateral relations with the USA. The strengthening bilateral relationship with the USA has been and will be very important for Finland's security and defense. As one researcher stated: "It also suggests that clear-eyed realism drives Finnish security policy thinking: that Finland knows that it is still the United States that serves as the European bulwark (and provider of guarantees) against potential external aggression; and, that NATO is a necessary but not sufficient component for broader European defence, mainly because most European states have ignored their own defense for too long."⁶²

In the future, Finland needs a network of multilateral, multinational and bilateral relationships for its security. Finland's comprehensive security solution should be composed of NATO membership, increasing Nordic cooperation, having an active role in EU's CFSP and CSDP and good bilateral relations between Finland and the USA. Of course, this all should be based on an active foreign policy and foster cooperation with other nations and peoples, primarily in the Nordic countries and other neighboring countries. Finland is approaching an important decision point. The possible membership would require a better political consensus before the next parliamentary (2015) and presidential (2018) elections and a comprehensive public education campaign to gain the support of public opinion.

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